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PARK AND RECREATION STUDY

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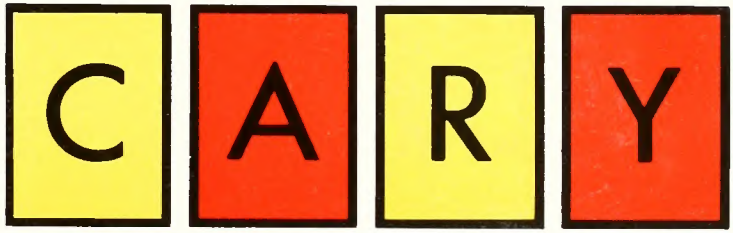

PARK AND RECREATION STUDY

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INTRODUCTION

"The typical working American today has 3,000 waking hours off the job each year, the equivalent of fourteen two-week vacations with pay. During their time off, the workers spend thirty billion dollars on entertainment, sports, clothing, food, furniture, tools, instruments, equipment, and other manufactured items that are used to enrich leisure time activity." By 1975, according to the experts, the average work week within the United States will be 34 hours. Today's average paid vacation of one week and a half will probably become in the next twenty years two and a half weeks with a large proportion of workers enjoying three weeks or even a month. With this increase in leisure time, recreation will play a more important role in the average worker's life than it does today. More than likely the majority of the recreational facilities created to meet these needs will have to be provided locally, in this case, by the Town of Cary.

With the above thoughts in mind, a recreation study has been made to supply the Town of Cary with a long range plan for recreation. The plan will indicate general sites for recreational facilities which should be purchased by the Town. Due to population growth and additional land needs for dwellings, industries, churches, schools, etc., land has become subdivided, houses built, and families settled before there is an awareness that people need recreation areas. As a result of this fact, available land for recreational purposes has become critically scarce.

This study has been developed in conjunction with the "Land Development Plan" for Cary, North Carolina, and should be considered an integral part of that plan. The "Land Development Plan" predicts the extent and direction of the

estimated future development. Whereas, the Recreation Plan determines the amount of space needed for recreational activities, the different types of activities which should be planned, and designates a general location where recreation areas should be developed. Generally, selection of recreational sites has been made with a direct relationship to the Thoroughfare Plan for both existing and future land uses.

EXISTING RECREATION FACILITIES

At the present time the existing recreation facilities in Cary are very limited. The only recreation area provided by the Town of Cary is Urban Park, a small picnic area located between the lanes of Urban Drive. Other recreation in the Town is either school sponsored, or of a more private nature. A more detailed list of existing recreational facilities follows.

School Recreation

The school system in Cary consists of a combined elementary and junior high school, a high school for whites, and an elementary school for Negroes. The schools furnish the usual recreational facilities found on most school grounds, but they provide a variety of activities in the form of athletics, parties, plays, and the like. The main drawback is that when the schools close in the summertime organized recreational activities practically cease. The citizens of Cary must resort either to the limited private recreational facitlities or to Raleigh's facilities.

Public Recreation

As indicated earlier, the only public recreation existing in Cary is the park on Urban Drive, called Urban Terrace. This is a small picnic area for passive recreation.

Private Recreation

The main private recreation facility in Cary is the Cary Recreation Park sponsored by a private corporation. The park contains a swimming pool, wading pool, two tennis courts, a lighted little league and junior league baseball field, a volleyball court, swings, and picnic facilities. It also contains adequate space for automobile parking.

Commercial Recreation

There are no commercial recreation facilities in Cary at the present time.

Church Recreation

The Cary Presbyterian Church is developing a ten acre community playground for use by the residents of the nearby neighborhoods. This playground will contain tennis courts, basketball courts, play apparatus and general open play areas. Other churches in Cary are developing and some types of recreation facilities are included in their future plans.

Civic Clubs

The Cary Civitan Club provides a small park for passive recreation on highway 54. This is a new park and no facilities exist at the present time. There are plans for a community building and for picnic facilities.

The Cary Lions Club owns a tract of land on the Macedonia Road between the Cary Park and the high school on which they plan to build a community building.

Evaluation of Existing Recreation Facilities in Cary

With the exception of recreation activities and facilities sponsored by the schools and semiprivate organizations, Cary has nothing resembling a recreation program. The Town has a recreation commission, but the function of this commission is very limited.

Despite the situation's present seriousness, it will become acute in the near future. The "Land Development Plan" has estimated Cary's 1983 population at 27,284 people -- a point where Cary will no longer be a small Town, but a thriving city. Presently, responsibilities for recreation depend on the individual who must find places to play, in the street, on vacant lots, or possibly further from home in uncultivated fields. As more and more land is developed for residential growth, there will be a searching demand for land areas which can be used for recreational purposes. In the future, today's vacant lots will situate houses and the streets will be lined with parked cars.

Cary needs to start such a program immediately. Even though it will be impossible to purchase and develop large recreational areas, the Town must develop an organizational structure, find recreational sites, formulate a method of financing the purchase of lots, and outline the development of a recreational program. If public recreation is organized as a continuing function of local government then it will remain commensurate with the needs of the City as it grows.

RECREATION STANDARDS

Recreation standards which were worked out jointly between the Division of Community Planning and the North Carolina Recreation Commission have been used as a basis for this report. These standards were based on nationally recognized standards and indicate the recreational facilities needed by a model community. The standards have been related to the needs of small towns with average population densities of approximately 3 to 5 families per acre. These recreation standards are as follows.

Neighborhood Playground

The primary purpose of a neighborhood playground is to provide active recreational facilities for children from 5 to 15 years old. A secondary purpose is to provide limited recreation for other members of the family including a play area for preschool children and informal recreation for young people and adults. A neighborhood playground's size will vary according to the population it serves and the availability of land. Minimum size should be approximately three acres, or 1.25 acres for every 1000 persons within the area it serves. The playground should be located as close as possible to the center of a half-mile residential service area. Also, it should be readily accessible by a major street and pedestrian walks. Facilities within such a playground should include the majority of the following:

A play area for preschool children in the age group 1-5.
An apparatus area for children in the age group 5-10.
Open space for informal play.
Paved multi-use courts for basketball, shuffleboard, etc.
Playing fields for softball, football, etc.

A shelter house, a wading pool, and benches.
Landscaped areas with walks for passive recreation.
Adequate off-street parking.

Neighborhood Park

The main purpose of the neighborhood park is to provide a small space of natural beauty for passive recreation in a densely populated and congested area. Usually, the park is small since its size is directly related to the natural features which it encompasses. It ranges from 1 to 10 acres. Facilities ordinarily consist of benches or chairs and paths. Some informal game areas and picnicking areas may be also included. Parking space for a limited number of cars should be furnished.

Community Recreation Area

The community recreation area is a multi-purpose area which provides facilities and promotes activities for all age groups and serves as a recreation center for the entire community. It is the recreational focal point of the community. The area's size is in accord with the number of people it serves and with the numbers and kinds of facilities it provides. The facilities are determined by the needs and desires of a particular community. Generally, a community recreation area is needed for approximately every 20 thousand people in a city. It should range from 20 to 40 acres in size, should be centrally located, and should give service to persons within a radius of nearly two miles. A community recreation area should include most of the following facilities.

Playing fields for baseball, football, softball, etc.
Courts for tennis, horseshoes, shuffleboard, volleyball, etc.
Lawn areas for croquet, clock golf, etc.
Play apparatus for children and a tot area.
Fireplaces, tables, and benches for small picnic groups.
A recreation building for indoor games, sports, and meetings.
An outdoor swimming pool, landscaping, and off-street parking.

Special Recreation Areas

Golf Courses - Since a golf course requires a large tract of land, many are located near or outside the municipal limits. Land with rough, uneven topography is suitable. A club house is usually included along with the course. Approximately 50 acres are needed for a nine hole course and 100 acres are needed for an eighteen hole course. It is estimated that a nine hole golf course will be economically feasible and recreationally desirable by 1980.

Parkway - Usually a parkway is an elongated strip of land located along a stream, valley, or sometimes between parallel streets. If a system of parkways could be developed that would connect the units of the recreation system together, it would be advantageous to the municipality. Generally, parkways fulfill an aesthetic function, but occasionally portions of the parkway are developed for recreational purposes.

Total Recreation Space

One acre for every 100 residents should be the total amount of open recreation and park space provided within a community. This includes all types of recreational areas and facilities mentioned in these standards.

FUTURE RECREATION NEEDS

PROPOSALS FOR FUTURE RECREATION
GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

Presently, the population of the Cary planning area is estimated to be 5,845. Using the assumptions of the "Land Development Plan" as a basis for the future population, it can be assumed that in 1983 the population of the planning area will be approximately 27,284 persons. Since the population and its composition will determine the size and type of any future facility, 27,284 people are the main consideration in planning the future recreation facilities for Cary. In terms of the proposed recreational standards, this means that Cary will need approximately 272 acres in recreational use by 1983.

Total population statistics are not the only standards by which to plan future recreation facilities. Age groupings, both existing and future, within the total population will largely determine the types of facilities that are needed most.

AGE MAKEUP OF THE TOTAL CARY PLANNING AREA POPULATION

AGES	PRESENT POPULATION	PERCENTAGE	FUTURE POPULATION	PERCENTAGE
Under 5	695	13.8	3,438	12.6
5-14	1,073	21.3	5,566	20.4
15-24	671	13.4	3,547	13.0
25-34	932	18.5	4,638	17.0
35-44	740	14.7	4,065	14.9
45-54	405	8.1	2,756	10.1
55-64	294	5.8	1,801	6.6
Over 65	216	4.3	1,473	5.4
TOTAL	5,026	100.0%	27,284	100.0%

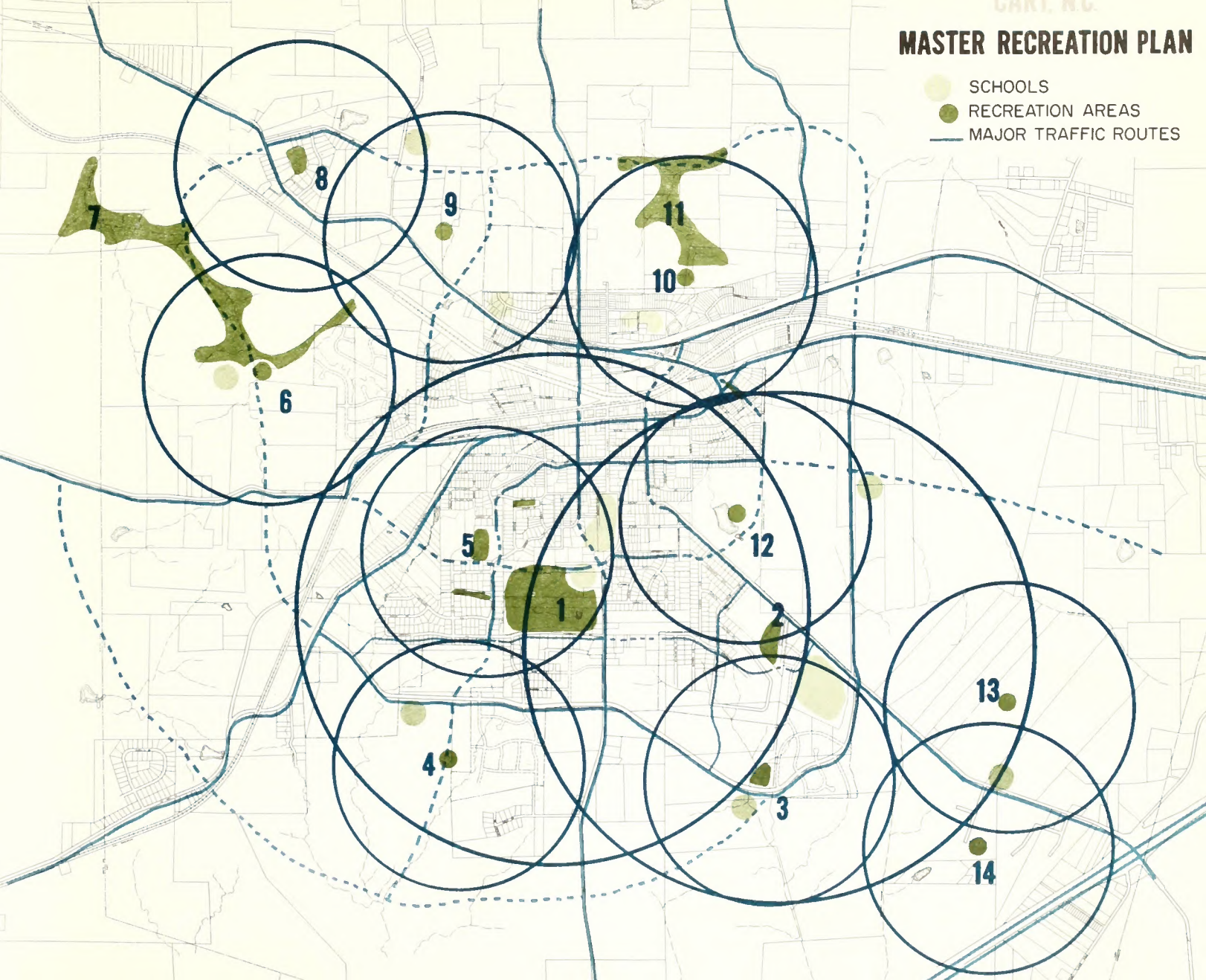
Note -- The above percentage for 1980 is the North Carolina State average for Metropolitan Urban Fringe Areas.

The chart on age makeup indicates that two groups comprise the largest percentage of the population. The groups include the age classifications from 5 to 14 and 25 to 34. This points out the fact that in planning for future recreational areas, emphasis should be placed on facilities that serve these particular age groupings. It should be remembered that major adult recreational activities such as motoring, boating, fishing, hunting, hiking, golfing, and many others, are provided for best in regional parks or in commercial facilities. Other adult recreation needs such as checkers, chess, shuffleboard, horseshoe pitching, and tennis can be satisfied by community recreation areas or neighborhood playgrounds.

To summarize, Cary will need approximately 272 acres of land in recreational use by 1983, with a primary need for facilities which stress the age groupings 5 to 14 and 25 to 34.

Master Recreation Plan

The master recreation plan shown on the following page indicates the approximate locations of recreation facilities which will be needed for the Cary Planning area by 1983. It points out the locales of neighborhood and school playgrounds, community recreation areas, and neighborhood parks for immediate as well as future needs. The plan also contains the proposed thoroughfare scheme which reveals how access is presently or will be provided to the various recreational facilities. The community recreational areas serve a two mile radius and the neighborhood playgrounds have a service distance covering one half mile. The majority of the locations shown on the plan are general and are not confined to any particular tract of land. The recreation commission should investigate the availability of land in the general areas and select the sites best suited for development.


MASTER RECREATION PLAN
SCHOOLS
RECREATION AREAS
MAJOR TRAFFIC ROUTES
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Proposal No. 1 - A large community recreation area of 60 to 100 acres is recommended to be purchased and developed near the center of Cary. As indicated in the Land Use Plan for Cary, there is a large tract of land close to the center of Town which is presently undeveloped. It is seldom that such a large tract of land remains undeveloped completely surrounded by residential neighborhoods and the central business district. When such an opportunity exists the Town and its citizens should make every effort to purchase it for community recreation purposes. It would be a memorable contribution to the development of the Town highly appreciated in the decades which are to come.

A community recreation area developed in this area should contain the following facilities:

A community center building with assembly hall, which could be used as a small community theater, meeting rooms which could be used for clubs, arts, crafts and other workshops and a kitchen so that it might be used for banquets.

A central library, for the Town which would be easily accessible and supplement the activities of recreation.

Recreation facilities for all ages; softball, football, and baseball fields; basketball, volleyball and tennis courts; shuffleboard, croquet, and facilities for less active games; play apparatus areas for children from five to ten years and protected play areas for small children under five.

Picnicking areas with tables, benches and outdoor grills.

Parking areas, walkways and access drives.

Other more specialized facilities might be planned as the area was developed.

Proposal No. 2 is an alternative solution to No. 1 and would consist of the expansion of the existing facilities of the Cary Recreation Corporation into a community recreation area. The existing recreation site of approximately 11 acres, is insufficient for a community recreation area and would have to be expanded by the purchase of at least ten additional acres to take care of future needs. This land should be on the same side of Macedonia Road and adjoin the existing park property. In order to function properly as a community recreation area, the entire facility should be under one administration. The best solution to this seems to be that of administration under the recreation program of the Town of Cary. If this were possible, it would have to be arranged with the stockholders of the existing corporation. Facilities which would be included in this community recreation area would be the same as those indicated in the first proposal.

Proposal No. 3 is for a neighborhood playground between Greenwood Forest Subdivision and the Cary beltline. This playground would serve the new sections of Greenwood Forest and future development south of the beltline, and should be developed according to the standards set up earlier for neighborhood playgrounds.

Proposal No. 4 is for a neighborhood playground west of Burtrose Subdivision. This playground would serve the residents of Burtrose and future development to the south and west. This area is rapidly developing and land in the general vicinity shown on the plan should be acquired as soon as feasible. Facilities which should be developed at this playground should be according to the standards for neighborhood playgrounds.

Proposal No. 5 is for a neighborhood playground to be developed in conjunction with the Cary Presbyterian Church. This site contains approximately ten acres and present plans of the Church include for this land to be developed for community use into a recreation facility.

Proposal No. 6 is for a neighborhood playground located to the west of the proposed Oakwood Heights development. This entire area is undeveloped at the present time, with the playground planned for future growth as the need arises. Land for the playground should be purchased ahead of the need so that all suitable land has not been used up when the need does arise. Development of the facility should be according to the standards for neighborhood playgrounds.

Proposal No. 7 consists of the development of a parkway along the drainage way of Coles Branch in the northwest section of Cary. This parkway would serve functionally as a buffer zone between the proposed industrial area along the railroad track and any residential development south of the industrial area. The parkway would also serve a visual or aesthetic purpose of a greenway within the Town at a time when the entire area is developed. Development of this parkway would consist primarily of passive recreation facilities -- picnic areas, walks, paths and nature areas.

Proposal No. 8 is concerned with the development of a vacant parcel of land in the middle of Bud-El acres Subdivision into a neighborhood playground. This particular piece of land has been left undeveloped with many of the present lots backing up to it. Facilities would be provided according to the proposed standards.

Proposal No. 9 is for a neighborhood playground to be located north of Highway 54 and west of the new elementary school. This playground would serve future residential development in the area and should be developed at a time when there is adequate development in the area. This neighborhood playground should contain the same type of facilities as proposed for the other playgrounds.

Proposal No. 10 is for a neighborhood playground to be located north of the Cary Elementary School. This playground would serve the present surrounding neighborhood and any new growth taking place in the area. Facilities which should be included would be those indicated in the standards for a neighborhood playground.

Proposal No. 11 is for a parkway along the drainage way of Black Creek north of Cary. This parkway could serve as a natural element in the City and for passive recreation purposes. Picnic facilities should be provided in the area, and the entire park treated as a nature center for the community.

Proposal No. 12 is for a neighborhood playground east of the central section of Cary. This facility would serve some of the area not yet developed, as well as much of the older section of Greenwood Forest Subdivision, and much of the residential development in east Cary. The general location shown on the Master Recreation Plan is a very good location, reasonably close to the center of Town. Undeveloped locations such as this will become more and more difficult to find as Cary becomes larger and larger. For this reason it is imperative that thought be given to the early purchase of sites such as this. Development at this playground should be according to standards for a neighborhood playground.

Proposal No. 13 is for a neighborhood playground east of Cary and north of the W and L Trailer Park. This is in an undeveloped area and would not be developed for a number of years. The playground would serve future residents north of the Cary Macedonia road. Facilities would be provided according to proposed standards.

Proposal No. 14 is for a neighborhood playground located between Hillsdale Forest and Greenwood Acres subdivisions. This playground would serve residents of both subdivisions as well as future growth in the general area. Development of the playground should be in accordance with the standards for neighborhood playgrounds.

Neighborhood Parks and Parkways

Although proposed locations for neighborhood parks and parkways are not shown on the Master Recreation Plan, the development of a system of natural areas throughout the community should be encouraged. The provision of parkways between streets such as between Dry Avenue and Robert Street and between Marjorie Drive and Dorothy Drive certainly adds to the beauty of the community as well as providing limited recreation space. In the past, one of the major Town concerns in regard to this type of park, has been the cost of continual maintenance. If such areas as this are to be provided, then it is necessary for the Town to maintain them in a proper fashion.

General Considerations

This report has concerned itself primarily with determining the number, size, and general location of recreation facilities which Cary will need in 1980. The existence or presence of a Master Plan for Recreation does not mean that all planning is finished for the next twenty or so years. Rather, the planning for recreation is just beginning. Now the Town has the tremendous task of acquiring sites and developing them as the need arises.

Site Acquisition

It is recommended that immediate steps be taken to start negotiations for acquiring sites in the general locations shown on the Master Plan for Recreation. Sites shown as reflecting immediate needs should be acquired first; however, negotiations for acquiring sites for future needs should be undertaken as soon as possible.

At the present time the only method that Cary has for the acquisition of recreation sites is through the donation of lands to the Town, and the Town has been reluctant to accept some sites because of the maintenance required to keep them up. Also many of the sites which developers give to the Town are nothing but useless bottomland which could not be used for active recreation purposes. Because of these facts, it is recommended that the Recreation Commission and the Town Council adopt a clear cut policy regarding the acquisition of sites by the Town. The Housing and Home Finance Agency of the Urban Renewal Administration offers a program of Federal assistance to communities to help in the acquisition of permanent open-space land. Grants of 20 and 30 percent of the cost of the land are available to the community to encourage

open space preservation. The Town of Cary should investigate this program and if possible share in its benefits. It is also recommended that at a later date, when Subdivision Regulation legislation in North Carolina is broadened to include mandatory provision of recreation space, the Subdivision Regulation of Cary be revised to include methods of reservation and dedication.

Design

Although the major purpose of this study is to provide the Town of Cary with recommendations for a comprehensive system or recreation facilities, the individual facilities as shown on the Master Plan, merit careful consideration as to their detailed design and development. If an area is to realize its maximum effectiveness insofar as function and visual appeal are concerned, it needs to be planned carefully. The use of a development plan will help assure the orderly development of each facility, even though limited funds may prevent the completion of all features at the same time. If such a plan is not available, development could be a haphazard proposition.

Public recreation areas need to be not only well planned but also pleasing to the eye. Even when they are solving purely practical problems of arrangement, circulation, and construction, designers should still achieve beauty. The fusion of beauty and workability can be achieved only by the application of design skill to the development of sites and facilities alike. No standard design can be applied to all recreation sites and situations. Each site presents new requirements and problems, and only a person professionally trained in the field of recreation and land planning is qualified to design an individual recreation site. For these reasons the Cary Recreation Commission should employ the talents of professional park planners, landscape architects, and other specialists in recreation design to plan new areas.

The following objectives should be considered in the design of all recreation areas: functional and effective use of the entire site; utilization of natural or unusual site features; adequate space for each activity or facility to be offered; convenient and safe access; internal circulation; off-street parking; economy in construction and maintenance; and a pleasing physical appearance.

It is recommemded that a detailed design plan be drawn for each recreation area after the site has been purchased and as it approaches the development stage. Detailed construction plans will also be needed for the various features essential to the development of the different facilities, such as buildings, drainage, grading, planting, lighting, pools, walks, benches, and the like. Compared to the investment in land and in the development of the recreation facilities, the cost of a design plan or detailed plans is negligible. These plans should be among the first things considered as each new site is acquired.

Playground Equipment

Playground equipment to be installed at the various recreation facilities should be selected with utmost care and attention to the functions that it is to perform. The swings, slides, seesaws, jungle gyms, horizontal bars that are standard equipment for play areas provide outlets for all the extra energy that children seem to accumulate. In addition to furnishing activity for the children, such equipment provides means of climbing, swinging, sliding, and balancing, which help them to develop coordination and maintain physical fitness.

Many of the games that children enjoy, such as hide-and-seek, cops and robbers, and exploring, cannot be related to any standard equipment. For this reason, new "play sculpture" with abstract forms and colors have been developed to stimulate the imaginations of the youngsters who use them. They add adventure and excitement

to the child's world of fantasy. Ideas for this type of play equipment are limitless; it can include anything that stimulates the imagination or promotes activity, from old automobiles or airplanes to concrete sculptures. Many of the standard types of playground equipment would become more interesting and more pleasing to the eye if a little imagination were used in their design and construction. For example, a sand box does not have to be just a square box filled with sand. A boatshaped sand box or a multi-level fortress sand pit is surely more attractive and promotes more imaginative play than the standard box.

The drawings on the following pages illustrate some of the many possibilities for abstract play equipment.

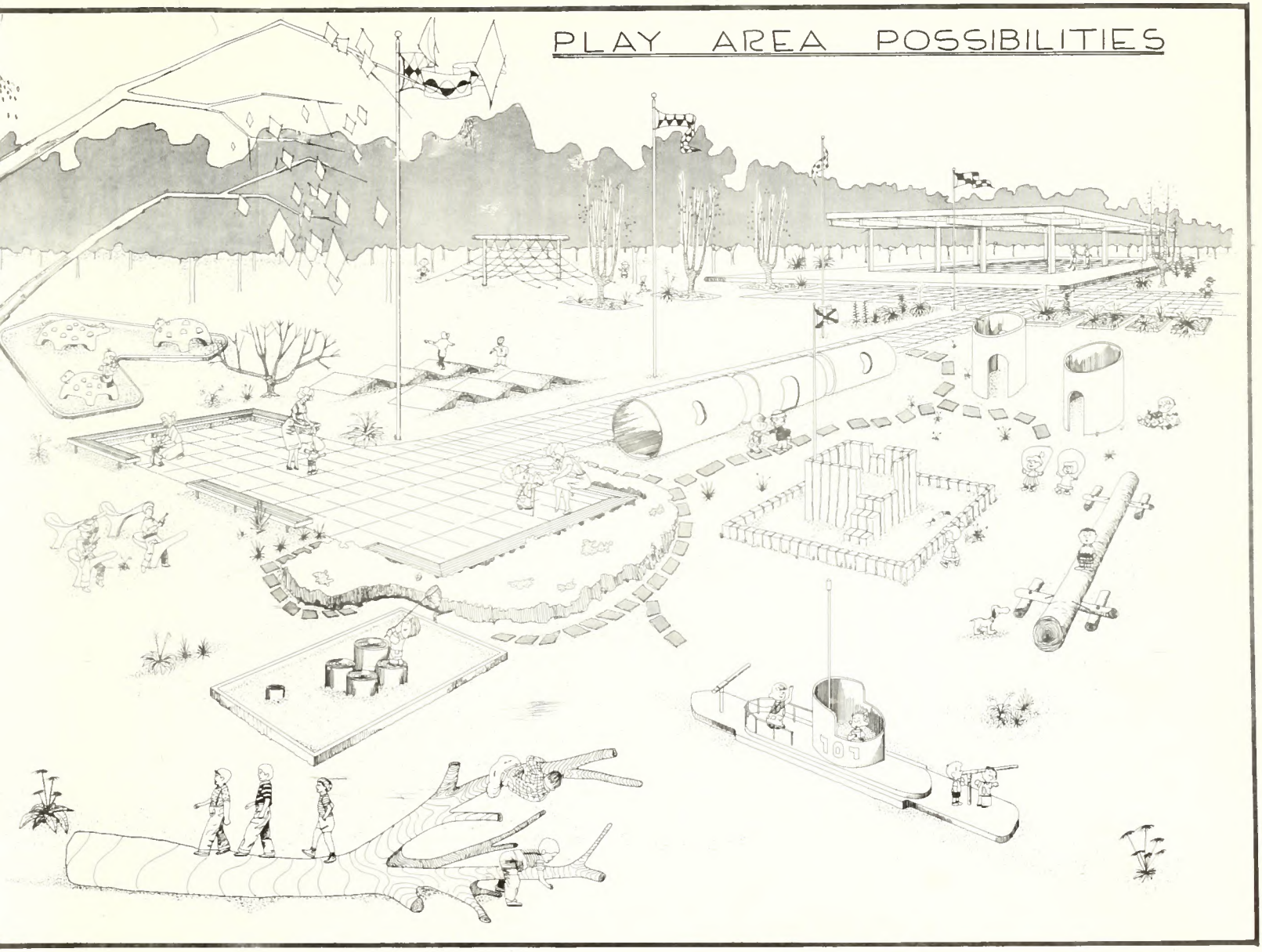
School and Church Recreation

At the present time many of the recreation needs of the citizens of Cary are being met through the use of school and church facilities. In the future as the city grows these areas should continue to be used within the framework of the recreation program. It will be a long time before the Town will have enough recreation sites to take care of the need. For this reason the school and church sites should continue complimenting the recreation program which the Town recreation program would provide. However, as the Town and the recreation program both grow, more and more emphasis should be put into an official Town recreation program which would have continuing responsibility for a program of activity for all ages of people.

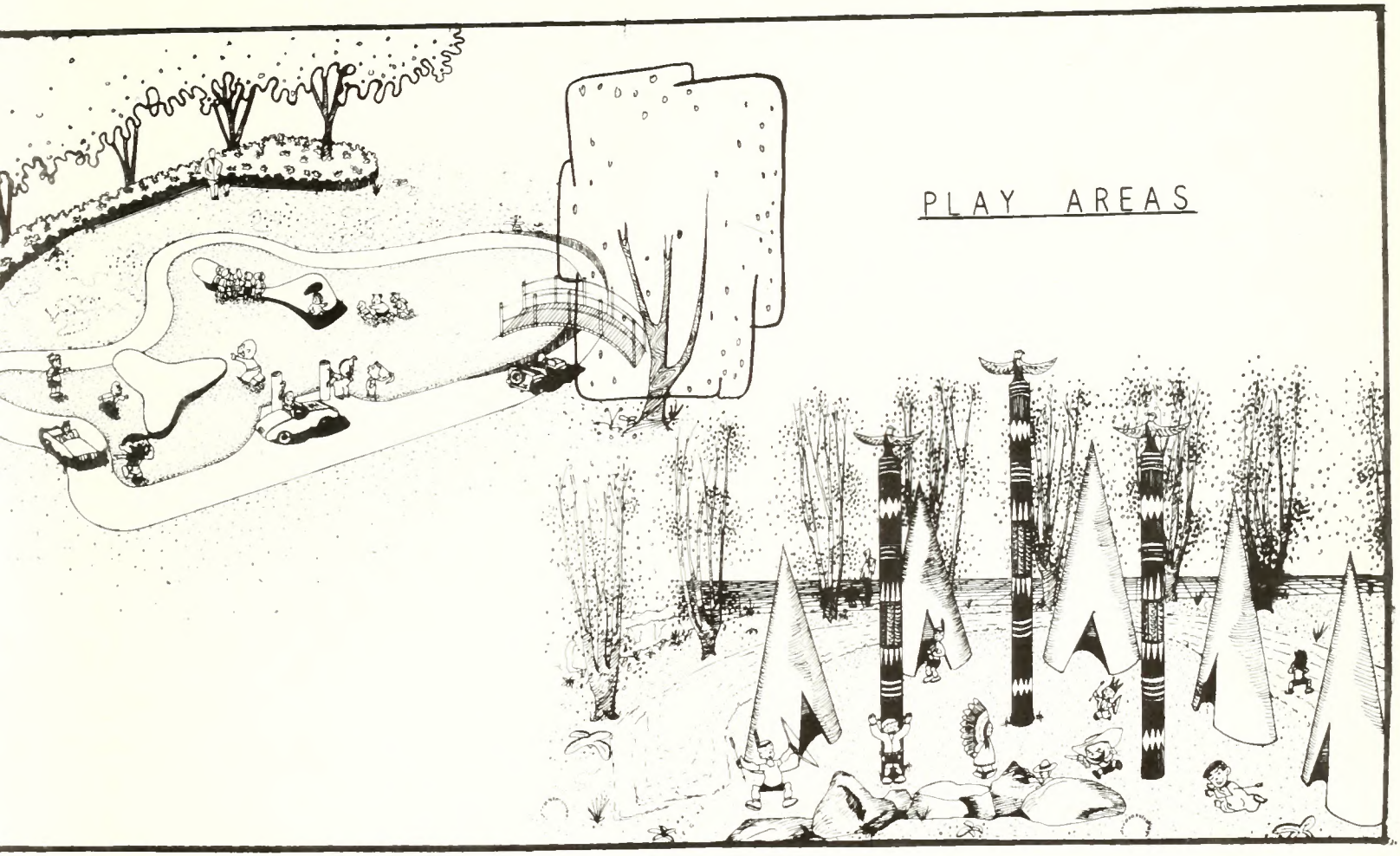
Recreation Director

A successful recreation program requires the continuous guidance of capable leaders. Competent leadership is particularly essential to a recreation program if the moneys invested in land and facilities are to yield a maximum return. Sometime in the near future, the Cary Town Council should employ a full-time Director. In the mean-

PLAY AREA POSSIBILITIES



PLAY AREAS



time, the Council should consider the employment of a part-time or summer director, perhaps one of the high school coaches or a college student majoring in recreation.

Volunteer Leadership

One of the methods by which Cary can get an organized recreation program started before it has funds to employ a recreation director is to encourage volunteer leadership. This type of program would help acquaint the public with the entire recreation program and its aims by involving interested members of the community in spare time guidance of certain recreation activities. Their activities could be coordinated by members of the Recreation Commission or by a part-time director.

Approval of Master Recreation Plan

It is recommemded that the Master Plan for Recreation be submitted to the Cary Town Council for approval as the Town's official guide for the acquisition and development of recreation facilities.

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